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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 26, 2001

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Statement of Chairman Jim Saxton
Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities

Hearing on the Conditions of Military Facilities and their Effects on Readiness and Quality of Life

The Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities meets today to consider the condition of military facilities and infrastructure and the effects of those conditions on the readiness of the armed forces and the quality of life for military personnel and their families.

Earlier this year, the Department of Defense submitted to Congress its most recent Installations Readiness Report as part of the Quarterly Readiness Report for October-December 2000. The overview of facilities conditions as they relate to readiness is sobering. The 41 major claimants or major commands within the military services and the Defense Logistics Agency rated a total of 341 facility classes. Of that number, 233 - or 68 percent - of the facility classes were rated C-3 or below, meaning that the services noted some functional deficiencies that would impair mission performance.

The military services remain largely in a physical plant that was constructed during the World War II and Korean War periods. The average age of the physical plant ranges from 40.3 years for the Army and the Air Force to 45.6 years for the Navy. A significant portion of the infrastructure is over 50 years of age. Training ranges, maintenance bays, and runway aprons are often undersized or inadequate to the mission. The military services need to continue to modernize outdated infrastructure, particularly as the maintenance and operational requirements of new weapons systems and changes in training doctrine continue to evolve.

This subcommittee has expended considerable effort over the last few years in improving the quality of life for military personnel and their families. The infusion of significant new resources has helped to improve military housing, child development centers, physical fitness centers, and other important QOL infrastructure. Much, however, remains to be done to keep the services on schedule to resolve the problem of inadequate living conditions. We need to increasingly turn our attention to the basic functions of military installations. New mission beddowns are critically important. Targeted programs, such as the Army Strategic Mobility Program, must remain on track. But, we cannot ignore basic infrastructure. Current mission runway pavements, sewage systems, and training ranges are basic facilities that provide critical support to the warfighter. Military installations are, in the end, war-fighting platforms in their own right and the Department of Defense should plan adequately for their modernization.

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